

Background

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Public Law 96-212  
96th Congress

## An Act

Mar. 17, 1980  
[S. 643]

To amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to revise the procedures for the admission of refugees, to amend the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962 to establish a more uniform basis for the provision of assistance to refugees, and for other purposes.

Refugee Act of  
1980.  
8 USC 1101 note.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act may be cited as the "Refugee Act of 1980".*

## TITLE I—PURPOSE

8 USC 1521 note.

SEC. 101. (a) The Congress declares that it is the historic policy of the United States to respond to the urgent needs of persons subject to persecution in their homelands, including, where appropriate, humanitarian assistance for their care and maintenance in asylum areas, efforts to promote opportunities for resettlement or voluntary repatriation, aid for necessary transportation and processing, admission to this country of refugees of special humanitarian concern to the United States, and transitional assistance to refugees in the United States. The Congress further declares that it is the policy of the United States to encourage all nations to provide assistance and resettlement opportunities to refugees to the fullest extent possible.

(b) The objectives of this Act are to provide a permanent and systematic procedure for the admission to this country of refugees of special humanitarian concern to the United States, and to provide comprehensive and uniform provisions for the effective resettlement and absorption of those refugees who are admitted.

## TITLE II—ADMISSION OF REFUGEES

SEC. 201. (a) Section 101(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)) is amended by adding after paragraph (41) the following new paragraph:

"Refugee."

"(42) The term 'refugee' means (A) any person who is outside any country of such person's nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of, that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, or (B) in such special circumstances as the President after appropriate consultation (as defined in section 207(e) of this Act) may specify, any person who is within the country of such person's nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, within the country in which such person is habitually residing, and who is persecuted or who has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. The term 'refugee' does not include any person who ordered, incited, assisted, or otherwise participated in the persecution of any person on

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account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion."

(b) Chapter 1 of title II of such Act is amended by adding after section 206 (8 U.S.C. 1156) the following new sections:

**"ANNUAL ADMISSION OF REFUGEES AND ADMISSION OF EMERGENCY  
SITUATION REFUGEES"**

"SEC. 207. (a)(1) Except as provided in subsection (b), the number of refugees who may be admitted under this section in fiscal year 1980, 1981, or 1982, may not exceed fifty thousand unless the President determines, before the beginning of the fiscal year and after appropriate consultation (as defined in subsection (e)), that admission of a specific number of refugees in excess of such number is justified by humanitarian concerns or is otherwise in the national interest.

Entry,  
numerical  
limitations.  
8 USC 1157.

"(2) Except as provided in subsection (b), the number of refugees who may be admitted under this section in any fiscal year after fiscal year 1982 shall be such number as the President determines, before the beginning of the fiscal year and after appropriate consultation, is justified by humanitarian concerns or is otherwise in the national interest.

"(3) Admissions under this subsection shall be allocated among refugees of special humanitarian concern to the United States in accordance with a determination made by the President after appropriate consultation.

"(b) If the President determines, after appropriate consultation, that (1) an unforeseen emergency refugee situation exists, (2) the admission of certain refugees in response to the emergency refugee situation is justified by grave humanitarian concerns or is otherwise in the national interest, and (3) the admission to the United States of these refugees cannot be accomplished under subsection (a), the President may fix a number of refugees to be admitted to the United States during the succeeding period (not to exceed twelve months) in response to the emergency refugee situation and such admissions shall be allocated among refugees of special humanitarian concern to the United States in accordance with a determination made by the President after the appropriate consultation provided under this subsection.

Emergency  
conditions.

"(c)(1) Subject to the numerical limitations established pursuant to subsections (a) and (b), the Attorney General may, in the Attorney General's discretion and pursuant to such regulations as the Attorney General may prescribe, admit any refugee who is not firmly resettled in any foreign country, is determined to be of special humanitarian concern to the United States, and is admissible (except as otherwise provided under paragraph (3)) as an immigrant under this Act.

Attorney  
General's  
authority.

"(2) A spouse or child (as defined in section 101(b)(1)(A), (B), (C), (D), or (E)) of any refugee who qualifies for admission under paragraph (1) shall, if not otherwise entitled to admission under paragraph (1) and if not a person described in the second sentence of section 101(a)(42), be entitled to the same admission status as such refugee if accompanying, or following to join, such refugee and if the spouse or child is admissible (except as otherwise provided under paragraph (3)) as an immigrant under this Act. Upon the spouse's or child's admission to the United States, such admission shall be charged against the numerical limitation established in accordance with the appropriate subsection under which the refugee's admission is charged.

Spouse or child,  
admission  
status.  
8 USC 1101.  
Ante. p. 102.

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Waiver.  
8 USC 1182.

Report to  
Congress.

Ante, p. 102.  
Report to  
congressional  
committees.

Consultation,  
publication in  
Congressional  
Record.

Proposed  
determination,  
review hearing.

"Appropriate  
consultation."

"(3) The provisions of paragraphs (14), (15), (20), (21), (25), and (32) of section 212(a) shall not be applicable to any alien seeking admission to the United States under this subsection, and the Attorney General may waive any other provision of such section (other than paragraph (27), (29), or (33) and other than so much of paragraph (23) as relates to trafficking in narcotics) with respect to such an alien for humanitarian purposes, to assure family unity, or when it is otherwise in the public interest. Any such waiver by the Attorney General shall be in writing and shall be granted only on an individual basis following an investigation. The Attorney General shall provide for the annual reporting to Congress of the number of waivers granted under this paragraph in the previous fiscal year and a summary of the reasons for granting such waivers.

"(4) The refugee status of any alien (and of the spouse or child of the alien) may be terminated by the Attorney General pursuant to such regulations as the Attorney General may prescribe if the Attorney General determines that the alien was not in fact a refugee within the meaning of section 101(a)(42) at the time of the alien's admission.

"(d)(1) Before the start of each fiscal year the President shall report to the Committees on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives and of the Senate regarding the foreseeable number of refugees who will be in need of resettlement during the fiscal year and the anticipated allocation of refugee admissions during the fiscal year. The President shall provide for periodic discussions between designated representatives of the President and members of such committees regarding changes in the worldwide refugee situation, the progress of refugee admissions, and the possible need for adjustments in the allocation of admissions among refugees.

"(2) As soon as possible after representatives of the President initiate appropriate consultation with respect to the number of refugee admissions under subsection (a) or with respect to the admission of refugees in response to an emergency refugee situation under subsection (b), the Committees on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives and of the Senate shall cause to have printed in the Congressional Record the substance of such consultation.

"(3)(A) After the President initiates appropriate consultation prior to making a determination under subsection (a), a hearing to review the proposed determination shall be held unless public disclosure of the details of the proposal would jeopardize the lives or safety of individuals.

"(B) After the President initiates appropriate consultation prior to making a determination, under subsection (b), that the number of refugee admissions should be increased because of an unforeseen emergency refugee situation, to the extent that time and the nature of the emergency refugee situation permit, a hearing to review the proposal to increase refugee admissions shall be held unless public disclosure of the details of the proposal would jeopardize the lives or safety of individuals.

"(e) For purposes of this section, the term 'appropriate consultation' means, with respect to the admission of refugees and allocation of refugee admissions, discussions in person by designated Cabinet-level representatives of the President with members of the Committees on the Judiciary of the Senate and of the House of Representatives to review the refugee situation or emergency refugee situation, to project the extent of possible participation of the United States therein, to discuss the reasons for believing that the proposed admission of refugees is justified by humanitarian concerns or grave

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humanitarian concerns or is otherwise in the national interest, and to provide such members with the following information:

"(1) A description of the nature of the refugee situation.

"(2) A description of the number and allocation of the refugees to be admitted and an analysis of conditions within the countries from which they came.

"(3) A description of the proposed plans for their movement and resettlement and the estimated cost of their movement and resettlement.

"(4) An analysis of the anticipated social, economic, and demographic impact of their admission to the United States.

"(5) A description of the extent to which other countries will admit and assist in the resettlement of such refugees.

"(6) An analysis of the impact of the participation of the United States in the resettlement of such refugees on the foreign policy interests of the United States.

"(7) Such additional information as may be appropriate or requested by such members.

To the extent possible, information described in this subsection shall be provided at least two weeks in advance of discussions in person by designated representatives of the President with such members.

#### "ASYLUM PROCEDURE

"SEC. 208. (a) The Attorney General shall establish a procedure for an alien physically present in the United States or at a land border or port of entry, irrespective of such alien's status, to apply for asylum, and the alien may be granted asylum in the discretion of the Attorney General if the Attorney General determines that such alien is a refugee within the meaning of section 101(a)(42)(A). 8 USC 1158.

"(b) Asylum granted under subsection (a) may be terminated if the Attorney General, pursuant to such regulations as the Attorney General may prescribe, determines that the alien is no longer a refugee within the meaning of section 101(a)(42)(A) owing to a change in circumstances in the alien's country of nationality or, in the case of an alien having no nationality, in the country in which the alien last habitually resided. Ante, p. 102. Termination.

"(c) A spouse or child (as defined in section 101(b)(1)(A), (B), (C), (D), or (E)) of an alien who is granted asylum under subsection (a) may, if not otherwise eligible for asylum under such subsection, be granted the same status as the alien if accompanying, or following to join, such alien. Spouse or child, status. 8 USC 1101.

#### "ADJUSTMENT OF STATUS OF REFUGEES

"SEC. 209. (a)(1) Any alien who has been admitted to the United States under section 207— 8 USC 1159.

"(A) whose admission has not been terminated by the Attorney General pursuant to such regulations as the Attorney General may prescribe, Ante, p. 103.

"(B) who has been physically present in the United States for at least one year, and

"(C) who has not acquired permanent resident status, shall, at the end of such year period, return or be returned to the custody of the Service for inspection and examination for admission to the United States as an immigrant in accordance with the provisions of sections 235, 236, and 237. 8 USC 1225, 1226, 1227.

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Permanent  
residence,  
admission  
conditions.

"(2) Any alien who is found upon inspection and examination by an immigration officer pursuant to paragraph (1) or after a hearing before a special inquiry officer to be admissible (except as otherwise provided under subsection (c)) as an immigrant under this Act at the time of the alien's inspection and examination shall, notwithstanding any numerical limitation specified in this Act, be regarded as lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence as of the date of such alien's arrival into the United States.

*Ante.* p. 193.

"(b) Not more than five thousand of the refugee admissions authorized under section 207(a) in any fiscal year may be made available by the Attorney General, in the Attorney General's discretion and under such regulations as the Attorney General may prescribe, to adjust to the status of an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence the status of any alien granted asylum who—

"(1) applies for such adjustment,

"(2) has been physically present in the United States for at least one year after being granted asylum,

"(3) continues to be a refugee within the meaning of section 101(a)(42)(A) or a spouse or child of such a refugee,

"(4) is not firmly resettled in any foreign country, and

"(5) is admissible (except as otherwise provided under subsection (c)) as an immigrant under this Act at the time of examination for adjustment of such alien.

Alien's  
admission  
record.

Upon approval of an application under this subsection, the Attorney General shall establish a record of the alien's admission for lawful permanent residence as of the date one year before the date of the approval of the application.

8 USC 1182.

"(c) The provisions of paragraphs (14), (15), (20), (21), (25), and (32) of section 212(a) shall not be applicable to any alien seeking adjustment of status under this section, and the Attorney General may waive any other provision of such section (other than paragraph (27), (29), or (33) and other than so much of paragraph (23) as relates to trafficking in narcotics) with respect to such an alien for humanitarian purposes, to assure family unity, or when it is otherwise in the public interest."

(c) The table of contents of such Act is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 206 the following new items:

"Sec. 207. Annual admission of refugees and admission of emergency situation refugees.

"Sec. 208. Asylum procedure.

"Sec. 209. Adjustment of status of refugees."

SEC. 202. Section 211 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1181) is amended—

(1) by inserting "and subsection (c)" in subsection (a) after "Except as provided in subsection (b)"; and

(2) by adding at the end thereof the following new subsection:

"(c) The provisions of subsection (a) shall not apply to an alien whom the Attorney General admits to the United States under section 207."

8 USC 1101.

SEC. 203. (a) Subsection (a) of section 201 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1151) is amended to read as follows:

*Ante.* p. 105.

"(a) Exclusive of special immigrants defined in section 101(a)(27), immediate relatives specified in subsection (b) of this section, and aliens who are admitted or granted asylum under section 207 or 208, the number of aliens born in any foreign state or dependent area who may be issued immigrant visas or who may otherwise acquire the status of an alien lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence, shall not in any of the first three quarters of any fiscal

203(a)(7) Conditional entries shall next be made available by the Attorney General, pursuant to such regulations as he may prescribe, in a number not to exceed 6 per centum of the number specified in this subsection, to aliens who satisfy an Immigration and Naturalization Service officer at an examination in any non-Communist or non-Communist-dominated country, (A) that (i) because of persecution or fear of persecution on account of race, religion, or political opinion they have fled (I) from any Communist or Communist-dominated country or area, or (II) from any country within the general area of the Middle East, and (ii) are unable or unwilling to return to such country or area on account of race, religion, or political opinion, and (iii) are not nationals of the countries or areas in which their application for conditional entry is made; or (B) that they are persons uprooted by catastrophic natural calamity as defined by the President who are unable to return to their usual place of abode. For the purpose of the foregoing the term "general area of the Middle East" means the area between and including (1) Libya on the west, (2) Turkey on the north, (3) Pakistan on the east, and (4) Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia on the south: Provided, That immigrant visas in a number not exceeding one-half the number specified in this paragraph may be made available, in lieu of conditional entries of a like number,

to such aliens who have been continuously physically present in the United States for a period of at least two years prior to application for adjustment of status.

NOTA BENE: Superseded 1 April 1980 by The Refugee Act of 1980. The procedure of Conditional Entry was NOT written into the new act. Conditional Entry no longer is a means of bringing a refugee into the U.S.